

Art Research News

Fall 1984.

The membership publication of the
International Foundation for Art
Research, Inc.



Woman in Pink and Green, Edmund C.
Tarbell, Collection of Mr. & Mrs.
Raymond Horowitz.

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1984-85 Series

**Controversies, Current Issues, and New Research in Art
Discussed by Leading Experts**

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November 14, 1984

**Building a Conservation Facility: the Hamilton Kerr
Institute of the Fitzwilliam Museum**

MICHAEL A. JAFFÉ, Director, the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England
Co-sponsored by the Conservation Center, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University
8:00 PM at the Institute of Fine Arts, One East 78th Street, New York City

December 3, 1984

**Authenticity, Condition, and Originality:
Problems in the Examination of Sculpture**

ARTHUR C. BEALE, Director and Conservator, Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
5:30 PM at the Explorers Club, 46 East 70th Street, New York City

February 11, 1985

American Impressionists: Connoisseurship Questions

TREVOR FAIRBROTHER, Assistant Curator of American Paintings,
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
WILLIAM H. GERDTS, Chairman, Dept. of Art History,
The Graduate Center, City University of New York
THEODORE E. STEBBINS, Jr., John Moors Cabot Curator of American Paintings,
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
5:30 PM at the Explorers Club, 46 East 70th Street, New York City

March 18, 1985

The Getty Museum of the Future

*JOHN WALSH, Jr., Director, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, California
5:30 PM at the Explorers Club, 46 East 70th Street, New York City

April 15, 1985

**Humanism, Restoration, and the Sympathetic
Attention to Works of Art**

M. KIRBY TALLEY, Director, Allen Memorial Art Museum,
Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio
5:30 at the Explorers Club, 46 East 70th Street, New York City

May 13, 1985

IFAR Spring Party

5:30 PM at the Explorers Club, 46 East 70th Street, New York City

*IFAR is pleased to announce the addition of a lecture by John Walsh, Jr., Director of The J. Paul Getty Museum, to our 1984-85 series. The lecture was confirmed after our program notice went into the mail.

For further information call 212/879-1780.
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Edmund C. Tarbell: Recognition Brings Confusion

Edmund C. Tarbell was one of the most prominent painters of his day in early twentieth-century Boston. He was a prominent figure in society, and a teacher who played a major role in the founding of the Boston school—a school whose artists thrived on an extended contemplation of the pleasures of civilized life, and clung to the Impressionist mode. Tarbell's enchanting canvases dwell on the beauty and subtlety of life and on a rich, dignified depiction of its exponents.

Tarbell's work was relatively unknown outside Boston until the publication of a catalogue raisonné in 1980, at a time when collectors had already begun to be aware of the subtle quality of his work, and there was a renewed and growing interest in the Boston Impressionists on the whole. Compiled by Patricia Jobe Pierce, a Boston-area dealer who has dealt extensively with the estate of the artist, the catalogue has many unusual features and concentrates as much on contemporary artistic heritors of Tarbell as on the artist himself. But since the publication of this work, many scholars have expressed especial concern about the inclusion in it of numerous pastel studies that do not seem to hold up to Tarbell's usual level of excellence. It has been suggested that, even at this moment of rediscovery, a number of forgeries have somehow crept into the artist's published oeuvre.

Recently one of these works was submitted to IFAR and, under close examination, was proved to be a forgery. Other submissions followed, and another forgery was identified, along with three works judged to be authentic. The two fakes are clearly related, and were most probably executed by the same hand.

One of the most interesting aspects of this validation process was the examination of a work that, but for the growing concern about this problem, would probably not have been questioned: a pastel *Steeplechase* of 1911 (facing, above). It was offered at Sotheby's in the Bentley-Sellars collection sale in the fall of 1983. Inscribed to one of Tarbell's closest friends—an artist named William Kaula, known as "Major"—it had come down from the latter's estate through his niece. The buyer at the sale purchased the pastel for a price below its lowest auction estimate, and after the sale he was advised to consult an independent authority concerning its authenticity.



The Steeplechase, Edmund C. Tarbell,
Private Collection.

One of the most interesting aspects of this validation process was the examination of a work that, but for the growing concern about this problem, would probably not have been questioned.



Steeplechase, on Jumpers, Edmund C.
Tarbell, Collection of the Tarbell
Family.

Edmund C. Tarbell Forgeries Identified by IFAR

IFAR sought the opinions of three scholars and also subjected the paper to chemical tests. For comparison, two original pastels were borrowed from Tarbell's estate, including an undisputed *Steeplechase on Jumpers* of 1909 (p. 3, below). At first glance, the two are very different in feeling and in the approach to the composition. The 1909 work is a finished and highly illusionistic study in which the textures of the horses' coats and the riders' positions are closely observed, and the color harmony of green, intense yellow and turquoise blue is fully orchestrated. The 1911 work is less developed. The spatial relationships are not as well conceived, and the artist seems to be relying less on a subtle visual intuition, seen throughout Tarbell's work, than he is striving for an effect. The composition is awkward, and the artist seems to be borrowing, not altogether successfully, from Degas.

Did Tarbell execute this study? After careful comparison, the scholars consulted noted that the pastel's palette of yellow, mauve, and turquoise is one that occurs in all the Tarbell pastels examined. Equally important, they observed many differences between this work and the now-documented forgeries. The provenance from the collection of William Kaula was substantiated. With the dissenting view of one scholar, IFAR judged this to be an authentic work—a decision much more difficult than judging a work to be forged.

Ms. Pierce, author of the catalogue raisonné, was consulted about the early exhibition record of this work as published in her catalogue. She stated that much of the information she gathered concerning exhibition histories was accepted from collectors and taken at face value. The catalogues of the Guild of Boston Artists and other galleries where these artists exhibited are little more than a checklist, she noted. Nevertheless, IFAR was able to find no basis in the Guild of Boston Artists catalogues from the year in question to indicate that the pastel was ever exhibited at the Guild, as the Pierce catalogue states.

Ms. Pierce commented, on this documentation process, that "if I had that catalogue to do over, I would do it very differently." It would appear that she, or another, will have to do just that.

B. B.



Woman in Pink and Green, a forgery.



Woman in Pink and Green, Edmund C. Tarbell, Collection of Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Horowitz.

Whenever a school of art is "discovered" by the *cognoscenti*, prices of representative works customarily begin to escalate. Often there is then a proliferation of forgeries of varying quality that make their way into the marketplace, creating havoc for the auction houses and dealers that handle them and causing frustration and anxiety for the purchasers. The sharp rise in prices of American paintings during the last decade has made this school a prime target for forgeries.

Over the years IFAR has identified a great many counterfeit works. Included among them were the seven paintings, examined last year, that were purported to be by Thomas Hart Benton, the American regionalist artist. As Bentions, their market value would well have exceeded \$150,000 (see *Art Research News*, Vol. 2, No. 2-3, 1983, p. 11).

Now there appears to be an influx of spurious works attributed to the Boston impressionist Edmund C. Tarbell (1862-1938). Unfortunately, some of them have been catalogued as originals in the 1980 catalogue raisonné on the artist written by Patricia Jobe Pierce. Two of these works, both pastels, have recently been examined by IFAR and have proved to be forgeries. They are *Woman in Pink and Green*, a Study, 1897 (left, above) and *Study of Frederick Prince on Horseback*, ca. 1908 (page 5, above). These two pastels, as well as a number of other works that have been questioned by scholars and experts in the field, purport to be studies for well-known original oil paintings by Tarbell. An exhaustive study of these works leads us to believe that they were executed within the last decade or so.

IFAR's examination of the two pastels included efforts to document the provenance and exhibition records, a direct examination by several experts, and a laboratory testing of the paper.

From a stylistic point of view, both pastels are noticeably inferior to Tarbell's authentic works of the same subject. The figure in *Woman in Pink and Green*, a Study, 1897 is ineptly drawn and the signature is overly neat—as if the artist were being too careful in his writing. The application of color appears so fresh as to preclude an 1897 dating.

With the second pastel, *Study of Frederick Prince on Horseback*, 1908, direct comparisons were made with a number of

authentic Tarbells in the same medium, and it was evident that the draughtsmanship of the work is weak. The drawing of the horse's head and hindquarters is poor, as is the modelling of the jacket. The limited palette looks lifeless when compared with the original works by the artist. The application of highlights appears dull and confused. As one expert observed, "Tarbell made a serious study of impressionism in the late 1880s and 90s and this pastel can only be described as an inept exponent of this style. In particular, the large areas of single color, such as the sky in the background, are flabby and lifeless and are, in fact, at odds with the idea of an impressionist sketch."

Both pastels were executed on an unusually brittle tannish paper that appeared to have yellowed. Both sheets of paper were tested chemically. The results showed a composition of approximately 75% softwood groundwood, the remaining amount with softwood bleached kraft. The presence of *bleached* kraft indicates that the paper could not have been manufactured before 1930 in the United States. This proves without question that both works are forgeries of late manufacture.

In the case of *Woman in Pink and Green, a Study*, 1897, an early exhibition record was cited in the catalogue raisonné of Tarbell's work. The pastel was recorded as having been exhibited in two now-defunct Boston galleries. These references were impossible to verify, and in view of other evidence against the authenticity of the pastel, must be treated as erroneous.

Virgilia Heimsath Pancoast



Study of Frederick Prince on Horseback, a forgery.



Frederick Prince on Horseback, Collection William Prince.

Dufy Forgeries Proliferate

The United States is probably the leading producer of Raoul Dufy forgeries, IFAR has recently learned, through a series of works ascribed to the artist and submitted to us recently for examination. To resolve the question of their authenticity, we consulted with Madame Guillon-Laffaille, a noted Dufy expert in Paris, who indicates that her photo archives of fraudulent Dufys are extensive and growing.

Madame Guillon-Laffaille is the author of *Raoul Dufy, catalogue raisonné des aquarelles, gouaches et pastels*. The book complements the catalogue of the artist's painted works edited by her father, Maurice Laffaille. Madame Guillon-Laffaille says that most of the works in her files originate in America. She has been able to identify the same hand at work in many of the photographs she has been asked to examine.

One forgery submitted to Madame Guillon-Laffaille for her opinion is *Carnaval à Nice*. Madame Guillon-Laffaille indicates that this is one of at least four forged versions that she knows of this theme. They are all direct copies of an original 1948 work in a private collection in Paris (Guillon-Laffaille, Vol. I, no. 209). The forgery has a sense of having been copied from a photograph of the original. The careless application of paint reveals little understanding of Dufy's working methods and color sense. The original composition, although freely executed, is tight, the draughtsmanship sure, and the figures and objects relate to each other. In the forgery, the details are grossly simplified, the brushwork sloppy, and there is a lack of cohesiveness in the arrangement of figures and objects in the composition. A close examination reveals pin pricks, used by the forger to transfer the main composition to the paper used for the forgery.

A second forgery recently seen by IFAR is entitled *Tottenham Corner* and is signed and dated 1933. In fact, it is a view of the racetrack at Epsom, in southeastern England. The title appears to be a misspelling of Tattenham Corner where the Epsom track makes a sharp turn just before the straightaway to the finish line. The work is one of at least four identical works in the Guillon-Laffaille archives that are based on variations of Dufy's views of Epsom, in particular, *Epsom la course* from the Phillips Gallery in Washington, D.C. (Guillon-Laffaille, Vol. I, no. 1031). The forgery, as in the case of *Le carnaval à Nice*,



Carnaval à Nice, a Dufy forgery.



Carnaval à Nice, a Dufy original.

is a simplified version of the original, with poorly defined forms and clumsy brushwork. Dufy's skillful use of bright colors, combined with the fluid forms of gentlemen in morning suits in the foreground and the throngs of people among banners, tents, and umbrellas in the background, give the original a decorative and festive air that is totally lacking in the forgery. Because Dufy's racetrack and regatta themes are favorite choices for collectors, they are often the subjects chosen by forgers for duplication. According to Madame Guillon-Laffaille, the median price for an original Dufy watercolor is now around \$30,000 and a large work of the racetrack at Epsom sold at auction last spring in New York for \$52,000.

Another fraudulent watercolor identical to "Tottenham Corner" has come to IFAR's attention recently, this one also bearing the prick marks the forger used to transfer the composition from another piece of paper. Usually, the use of the watercolor technique causes the holes to close up, but in this instance, they were very apparent. To illustrate just how rapidly forgeries circulate from one person

to the next, Madame Guillon-Laffaille related how, in the span of a few months, she had inquiries from three different people about this single "Tottenham Corner," all from different parts of the country.

The major auction houses in New York are very concerned about the problem and they now routinely consult with Madame Guillon-Laffaille about any watercolor that is not known or documented. In contrast, the French auction houses do not consult with her, and she points out that at Hotel Drouot in Paris there are just too many auctions for any kind of organized procedure for authenticating questionable works of art to be possible. Nevertheless, the circulation of Dufy forgeries is greater here than in France, partly because in France, dealers must guarantee a work for thirty years.

According to Madame Guillon-Laffaille, watercolors are more difficult to forge than works in another medium. The watercolor technique is quick and sure, and there is no way to re-do or re-work the surface. She noted that Dufy developed a special technique for applying watercolors to the paper and a deviation from this method is readily apparent to her.

Madame Guillon-Laffaille's greatest concern is that these works continually change hands and there appears to be little interest in getting them off the market permanently. In France, an artist's moral rights law permits an artist's family to have fraudulent works taken out of circulation and destroyed. This law is based on the concept that the reputation of the artist is damaged by any perpetuation of forgeries. Unfortunately, in the United States there is no similar mechanism for getting forgeries out of circulation short of having the authorities seize a known forger's works as evidence while prosecuting him for fraud. Art fraud has not been a priority issue with lawmakers here, and until it is, forgeries will continue to flood the marketplace circulating from one unsuspecting buyer to another.

*Virgilia Heimsath Pancoast
Director, Authentication Service*

A reprint of this article appears in Art & Auction, November, 1984.



Epsom, la course, a Dufy original, The Phillips Collection, Washington.



Tottenham Corner, a Dufy forgery.

An Anatomical Lesson

Some Principles of Connoisseurship and the Rembrandt Research Project

by M. Kirby Talley

Connoisseurship, like *patience*, is basically a solitary pastime. One can, of course, play *patience à deux*, and as far as connoisseurship is concerned the joint career of Crowe and Cavalcaselle springs immediately to mind. It is too well-known to need much comment. What is, however, relevant is that of the two, Cavalcaselle was by far the better connoisseur. The lion's share of credit for their still impressive *A New History of Painting in Italy*, 1864-66, and *A History of Painting in North Italy*, 1871, must go to him. Connoisseurship depends upon a well-defined notion of the individual personality. Awareness and comprehension of the work of a given individual as being unique to him is the cornerstone of connoisseurship. Achievement of such an intimate understanding between two "individuals," in this case the beholder and the artist as seen through his works, demands an exclusive relationship, the type reserved for friends. As with Orestes and Pylades, two is company, and three very much a crowd.

A case has recently been made for team investigation and criticism which might be called committee-connoisseurship. It will be found in the "preface" to the weighty and exorbitantly expensive first volume produced by the Rembrandt Research Project entitled *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, The Hague: 1982.¹ It is perhaps not irrelevant to note in passing that football and committee meetings are the two favorite national pastimes in The Netherlands. Aware that such an approach would undoubtedly meet with a to-be-expected scepticism elsewhere, the authors (hereafter referred to as the Group) offer an apologia which does not quite succeed in convincing the careful reader. The Group draws our attention to the very obvious fact that, "adopting intuition as a major tool for arriving at an image of the artist and his work, it seems an impossible arrangement to operate as a group, which by definition cannot share a joint intuition." This makes sense and it is even admitted that, "A closely knit group tends to feel less doubts or hesitations than an individual." Again, a very cogent remark. If we are to believe the remainder of this apologia then we

must accept that through the means of endless discussions dissenting opinions were finally resolved since "a clarified image of the early Rembrandt oeuvre was developed on the basis of consensus."² Since The Netherlands does not have the jury in its jurisprudential system, the Group cannot be blamed for not ruminating on the possible numbers of innocents who have been hanged by juries composed of a majority of overbearing members who managed to subdue the doubts of their less vociferous and/or steadfast colleagues. The veto of one member, if used, is sufficient to hang the jury instead of the defendant. Such was not the case with Rembrandt's jury.

The reader is informed at the very outset of the "Preface" that "only conscientious examination, making use of up-to-date methods of investigation whenever possible, could warrant a radical revision of the Rembrandt canon."³ From this point on a discussion evolves which contains an amazing number of startling contradictions on the cardinal principles of the Group's method. It is as confusing as the Cheshire Cat's directions to Alice in her journey through Wonderland. What are the up-to-date methods of investigation used by the Group? We are informed that X-rays, which are hardly a recent innovation, have been extensively used, and, "This being so, we attached a more than casual significance to the X-ray evidence, and a relatively large place has been allotted to reproduction and description of the X-rays."⁴ Less success was had using other types of photography, namely ultraviolet and infrared. Another well-established method, dendrochronology, was used and resulted in the Group's adjusting their dating of rejected paintings to agree with the scientific evidence. However, as Christopher White noted in his editorial on the project in the *Burlington Magazine*, dendrochronology, "if the truth be told does not take one very far."⁵ What, then, is it that is such an up-to-date method that it justifies the Group's "radical revision of the Rembrandt canon"?

Evidently the "innovative" method in question is simply describing "the features — including the purely physical features —

of each painting, seen as an object, as fully as possible. This would naturally relate to the paint layer, but would also take in the ground and support."⁶ Anyone even casually familiar with the literature on the methods and materials of painting, especially sources, will at once realize that such an approach is as old as the hills. Joshua Reynolds, to take only one example, made copious technical descriptions of the Old Masters he examined in Italy. The technical descriptions, which more than lace the *Corpus* and can only be described as both excessive and soporific, especially considering modern advances in macro- and micro-photography, are definitely stated by the Group as providing, "after all, the most important basis for our assessment."⁷ This is a remarkable statement considering the repeated reserve regarding these descriptions elsewhere in the text. For instance, we are told that these descriptions which "were made under widely-varying circumstances where the lighting, equipment and technical documentation available were concerned... cannot claim to be anything more than an approximation, with no pretension to scientific exactitude."⁸

Further on, we are informed that "much energy has been devoted to a careful record of our close inspections of the paintings. This has certainly led to quite lengthy descriptions of observations which in many cases hardly contribute in the final analysis to the formation of our opinions."⁹ Including such discarded material for the sake of thoroughness is like a *post-mortem* discussion after a game of bridge. Back-tracking in the Group's text we are presented with an interesting tidbit of information that further brings their descriptive method in almost total discredit. "Leaving aside the considerable complications that wear, damage and restoration can introduce, the naked eye — alone, or with the help of only a magnifying-glass — is a relatively primitive tool. Only in a limited number of instances was there a microscope on hand to help us in investigating the problems that arose."¹⁰ This is both a notable confession on the part of the Group since they obviously believed their examination, primarily by

the naked eye, to be lacking in effectiveness, and an astounding bit of nonsense since the naked eye, as any ophthalmologist will confirm, is anything but a "relatively primitive tool." All readers of the *Corpus* should continually bear this passage in mind when weighing its evidence and conclusions. Against this background one can now quite legitimately query the Group's opening proposition. Are their methods really so up-to-date and accurate, as they would have us believe, to justify a "radical revision of the Rembrandt canon"? It would seem they are not.

The constantly vacillating ruminations, outlined above, over a supposedly objective method of examination amply reveal that the Group views scientific and/or technical analysis ambivalently. It is correctly admitted that, "technical information alone would not provide us with criteria for authenticity."¹¹ While the Group tells us in one place that the lengthy technical descriptions were "the most important basis for our assessments," elsewhere they assure us that, "even if all Rembrandts were to be subjected to thorough scientific investigation, a decision on their authenticity would rest mainly on considerations of a very different kind."¹² What, then, are these considerations that can offer criteria for authenticity?

The answer, of course, is stylistic features particular to Rembrandt. At this point the Group finds themselves confronted with the central issues of old-fashioned time-tested and honored connoisseurship and they balk at having to admit that what it all boils down to in the long run is to a great extent subjective analysis of those often ineffable qualities which are individual to one artist and not another. With a steadfast reluctance to give way which can be likened to a difficult dental extraction, they finally concede "the inevitability of subjectivity in the quest for authenticity."¹³

Those qualities which can only be apprehended by subjective or intuitive insight "can be isolated features, or much more complex characteristics which escape objective analysis but are nonetheless perceived and considered, rightly or wrongly, as typical for the artist."¹⁴ This is correctly seen as the bailiwick of stylistic interpretation. Style is defined "in the

broadest sense, from the single brushstroke to the general design of a painting, [and] constitutes the repertory of features which enable one to accept or reject a painting." The repertory consists of "the organization of the composition, the characteristics of the 'stage-direction,' and imponderables such as the mood of the painting."¹⁵ In other words one must be able to comprehend the mind of the artist.

Max J. Friedländer in *On Art & Connoisseurship* noted that stylistic analysis rapidly moves into the area of intuition. He based his judgments in the first instance on the initial impression made on him by a painting. "This inner certainty can only be gained from the impression of the whole; never from an analysis of the visible forms."¹⁶ This approach is by no means original to Friedländer and can be found in André Félibien's "De la Connoissance des Tableaux," 1725, where he states that one can never "connoître le mouvement du pinceau, si l'on ne penetre dans celui de l'esprit."¹⁷ This idea runs through the works of Jonathan Richardson, Sr., Giovanni Morelli, and Bernard Berenson, all three great connoisseurs as well as great writers on the subject.

While the Group could not deny intuition, which they adopted "as a major tool,"¹⁸ they did not allow their subjective insights to get the upper hand over their verbal conclusions. Intensely bothered by having to work with something as subjective and elusive as intuition, the Group firmly states in a passage of chilling Calvinistic primness worthy of Frans Hals' *Regentesses of the Old Men's Almshouse, Haarlem*, that, "In our catalogue entries the reader will find no poetry. We positively mistrust poetic evocations of Rembrandtish qualities. Deeply-felt songs of praise have been written in the past about highly suspect paintings in which no one believes today."¹⁹ No one these days would insist upon Walter Pater's purple prose (pleasant as it is to read), but elegant and inspiring language, which might also be termed poetic, is as equally fitted to convey the truth as torpid and jejune prose. Is it not exactly those Rembrandtish qualities accurately observed and succinctly expressed in a persuasive and evocative manner which gets us closer to the artist? There are, of course, few writers on art who are capable of writing in such a manner. Kenneth Clark was certainly one of them and

his slim, in terms of size, *Introduction to Rembrandt* will get the reader closer to what Rembrandt the artist is than the voluminous *Corpus*. This is perhaps why he was invited upon the occasion of Rembrandt's 300th anniversary in 1969 to give his "Commemorative Speech" in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

It might be argued by some that a work which sets out to present its readers with a revised corpus of an artist's works does not have to bother itself with such matters. If that is so, if the writers indeed do not have to address themselves to this problem, can readers be legitimately expected to believe their conclusions? If the writers do not first explicitly clarify what Rembrandt is, can they tell us what he is not? With an artist like Rembrandt, who had many pupils, followers, and imitators (for whatever purposes), such an approach is essential. A large number of paintings, accepted by Bredius, have been relegated to Category C in the *Corpus* since "a sufficiently convincing relationship cannot be found." This is fine as far as it goes, but then we read the following. "Drawing a sharp dividing line between *bona fide* paintings by contemporary artists and more or less old, possibly fraudulent imitations would require a much clearer insight into 17th-century standards than we possess."²⁰ Drawing such a distinction is exactly the basis of all such sifting which goes under the name of connoisseurship. Everyone who sets himself such a task will have to do it. The 17th-century English School is fraught with problems equal in difficulty to those met by the Group, and yet C.H. Collins Baker, in his monumental *Lely & The Stuart Portrait Painters: A Study of English Portraiture Before & After Van Dyck*, 1912, did not attempt to skirt the problem by an admission that he lacked the knowledge to tackle his chosen subject! Many of his attributions have been revised in the light of new insights and evidence, but he undertook the problem in all its ramifications.

In comparison to Category C, Category B is even more telling. Seven pictures are left dangling as "Paintings Rembrandt's authorship of which cannot be positively accepted or rejected."²¹ After fourteen years of intensive research one can expect a more decisive judgment than this from the Group. Berenson noted that, "the spirit and quality of the work reveal whether we have before us a great master or

second- or third-rate painter."²² Every artist, including Rembrandt, has his better and worse days, but regardless of that his own unique spirit and quality will always be recognizable. No matter what the similarities may be, the differences between a sublime master's works and those of his less-gifted contemporaries or later followers and imitators will always be greater.

The recurrent stumbling block for the Group is their admirable desire to be objective. Justifiably they affirm that, "Our attempt to define and purify Rembrandt's oeuvre amounts to an effort to find rational, communicable arguments to support our opinion."²³ Opinions, of course, remain opinions, but it is always better to attempt to back them up than not. The crux of the Group's dilemma is that opinions in the area of connoisseurship will always consist of more than 95 % intuition based on a subjective rather than objective rationale. To offset this fact they relied heavily on their technical descriptions which they both repeatedly puff and deflate. Oddly enough, the importance of one very helpful technical aspect readily discernible to the naked eye, namely brushwork, is played down. A.P. Laurie's pioneering study of the characteristics of Rembrandt's brushwork is also more or less dismissed since "brushwork can be significant only in the context of the entire painting."²⁴ Here in a rare instance of attempting to make a synthesis, at least as far as technique is concerned, the Group misses the point. Brushwork must be studied in detail, in various parts of a picture, to see how the brush moved when defining a particular form. The over-all effect may have a certain life, a certain vibrancy, due to the brushwork in general, but similarity can only be determined, in this case, by carefully studying and comparing details. That Rembrandt's brushwork was valued and imitated by other artists is obvious—the Group mentions this—but despite the care lavished to imitate the general effect, it is impossible to duplicate something intensely personal as brushwork. Jonathan Richardson, Sr. in *The Connoisseur*, 1719, accurately observes that no two men think and act in an absolutely identical manner. He continues by remarking that, "If in forming an A, or a B no two Men are exactly alike, neither will they agree in the manner of Drawing a Finger, or a toe, less in a whole Hand, or Foot, less still in a Face, and so on."²⁵ While

Morelli and Berenson reversed the order of emphasis, the basic principle is correct. A detailed study of brushwork can therefore provide extremely valuable evidence as to the artist's hand.

Among the pictures removed from Rembrandt's oeuvre, on the basis of technique not style, is the *Laughing Young Man*, ca. 1630, in the Rijksmuseum. It is given to the "immediately circle of Rembrandt and Lievens."²⁶ Surely for a picture of this quality the Group could suggest a possible candidate. It is dismissed because "Rembrandt's work offers no precedent for the frequent use of an ochre colour in the face and for the strongly coloured highlights."²⁷ Perhaps the Group temporarily forgot, among other works, the *Musical Allegory*, 1626, also in the Rijksmuseum. In the technical description of the *Allegory* we read about "a fairly strong yellow" used in the light area of the old woman's head, and of "a bright yellow" used in the older man's face which is "very noticeable, especially along the nose." The highlights of his eyes are even "yellow."²⁸ We are also told that the *Laughing Young Man's* hair "lying loosely on the head and with a certain amount of modelling given by highlights, is not found in Rembrandt."²⁹ If this is so, one wonders just who painted the hair of the young man in the *Allegory*. Again, on the *Laughing Young Man*, we read that the "purplish grey on the left above the shoulder and the drawn outline to the shoulder on this side are likewise features one does not expect in his work."³⁰ There is, however, a certain amount of purplish grey in the *Allegory*, and there are very obvious shoulder outlines used in various figures in the *Leiden History Painting*, 1626.

That the Group spent so much time in discussing Lievens in connection with the *Laughing Young Man* is curious. A look at his ca. 1628 *Portrait of Rembrandt* in the Rijksmuseum readily shows he did not possess the spontaneous spirit necessary to paint the *Laughing Young Man*. Constantijn Huygens, the perceptive Dutch connoisseur and contemporary of Rembrandt, remarked that, "Lievens was superior in grandeur of invention, but Rembrandt excelled in *affectum vivacitate*," translated by Lord Clark as "vivacity of emotional expression."³¹ In the "Summary" to their catalogue entry on the *Laughing Young Man* the Group terms "the handling of paint, lighting, colouring, and motif" Rembrand-

tesque. They add that, "so far as one can discover Lievens never painted in this way." And, "The relatively fluent manner of painting and the quite pronounced treatment of light seem to correspond to a later phrase of Rembrandt's development."³² Does all of this laborious and circular Jabberwocky warrant dismissing the *Laughing Young Man* from Rembrandt's canon? Definitely not. Unfortunately, after the *Corpus* was published, the picture, one of the public's favorites, has been banished to the museum's storeroom, making easy comparison with other Rembrandts in the collection, and with the Lievens' *Portrait of Rembrandt*, impossible.

The Group is so convinced that Rembrandt's technical development had to be logical that they preclude the possibility of his either working in a certain way at an early moment in his career or repeating himself at a later date. Of course, Rembrandt was a painter, not a logician, so this type of argument is not only specious, but downright silly. To attempt to map out some sort of ironclad technical progression in Rembrandt's works is to reduce his painting to a filling-in-the-dots on an ascending scale of difficulty. This type of rigid academic thinking has resulted in a work which never gets beyond analysis to synthesis. The Rembrandt Research group has rigorously dissected Rembrandt producing a corpse instead of a corpus. They have taken his pictures apart, but they will never succeed in putting the artist together. The Group's approach is basically wrong since it constantly tries to demonstrate what Rembrandt is not, rather than what he is. A body may consist of dissected parts, this can be shown by the anatomist, but these corporeal tidbits do not make a man. You can endlessly saw, hack, and fillet the cadaver, but you will never understand the soul. Or, as Max Friedlander remarked, "One should not approach [works of art] with the determination to solve a problem. One must let them speak, one must converse with them, but one must not interrogate them. To an inquisitor they refuse any information."³³

The *Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings* is, as T.S. Eliot once observed of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, "that monstrous masterpiece, of which I am constrained to say, one is enough!" Hopefully, it will deter other committee-minded art historians from banding together on a similar undertaking.

M. Kirby Talley is the director of the Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio.

IFAR Advisory Council Profiles:

Footnotes

¹The authors are: J. Bruyn, B. Haak, S.H. Levie, P.J.J. van Thiel, E. van de Wetering. Four more volumes have been promised.

²For the quotations see *Corpus*, p. XVII.

³*Ibid.*, p. IX.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. XII.

⁵Christopher White, "The Rembrandt research project," *The Burlington Magazine*, CXXV, 968 (Nov. 1983), 662.

⁶*Corpus*, p. XI.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. XII.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. XI.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. XVI.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. XI.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Ibid.*, p. XIV.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. XVII.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. XV.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. XIII.

¹⁶London: Bruno Cassirer, 1944, p. 173.

¹⁷*Entretiens* (Trevoux: 1725), X, 93.

¹⁸*Corpus*, p. XVII.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, pp. XV-XVI.

²⁰*Ibid.*, pp. XIX-XX.

²¹See White, *op. cit.*

²²Bernard Berenson, "Rudiments of Connoisseurship," in *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art*, 2nd Series (London: George Bell & Sons, 1902), p. 122.

²³*Corpus*, p. XIV.

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵J. Richardson, *The Connoisseur: An Essay On the whole Art of Criticism as it relates to Painting* (London: 1719), pp. 102-103.

²⁶*Corpus*, p. 629.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 632.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 117.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 632.

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹Kenneth Clark, *An Introduction to Rembrandt* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978), p. 14.

³²*Corpus*, p. 633.

³³Friedländer, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

IFAR's Advisory Council is the mainstay of its Authentication Service. Its members are distinguished by their contributions both to scholarship and connoisseurship. In this issue, we begin a series of profiles of members of the Advisory Council. While their names and contributions may already be well known to our readers, this column gives Advisory Council members an opportunity to talk of their current work and concerns.

John Walsh, Jr.



John Walsh, Jr. appears to be enjoying his new role as director of the J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu, California. As a former Curator in the Department of European Paintings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and more recently Curator of Paintings at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, he is well prepared to take on this highly visible post. Walsh is a scholar of Dutch seventeenth-century painting and has taught at both Columbia and Harvard. Until he accepted the Getty directorship, he had spent his entire career in the East.

Walsh spoke of his delight at finding Los Angeles to be sophisticated, diverse, and interesting, wholly contrary to the stereotype held by many Easterners. He said he spent the first eight months studying the collections, staff and the programs. He has tried to formulate goals for the next five years or so, which include establishing priorities for collecting. He is quick to point out that the museum is the repository of one man's personal collection and consequently reflects Getty's preference for Greek and Roman antiquities, French decorative arts and European paintings

from the Middle Ages to the 1900s. The collection has been broadened a bit, but Walsh hopes that it will remain medium-sized and sharply focused. He thoughtfully adds that as director, he is not afraid of gaps in the collection and believes that the Getty was never intended to be a "general" museum—that is, comprehensive in all areas. He feels that the Getty should not try to develop or duplicate collections that are handled by other museums in the area and believes it is far more important to concentrate on being recognizably strong in a few areas.

Walsh anticipated questions regarding the Getty's purchasing policy by stating that the current art market does not allow a museum to buy much on a large scale. The Getty has begun, however, to buy medieval manuscripts, which makes their collection the finest on the West Coast—and as Walsh described it, "the best in the United States outside of the Morgan and the Walters." He adds that the museum has begun a collection of drawings, now numbering a little over eighty (including those bought at the recent Chatsworth sale), which will be exhibited on a rotating basis. He emphasized that the Getty's foremost criteria when buying the drawings was to be highly selective, a criterion that seems to establish their policy for purchasing all works of art. In addition, a new department of photography has recently been established with the Getty's purchase of 18,000 photographs from the nineteenth and early twentieth century.



Study of a Kneeling Figure with a Sketch of a Face, Andrea del Sarto, The J. Paul Getty Museum.

John Walsh, Jr., Michael Jaffé, and Robert Schmit

When talking about the expansion of the museum to Brentwood, Walsh spoke enthusiastically of the site, situated on a spectacular setting in the foothills of the Santa Monica mountains. When the new building is completed at the end of this decade, the paintings and drawings, manuscripts and decorative arts will be moved to the new location and the Malibu villa will become exclusively a museum of Classical antiquities. Walsh has already begun to develop programs for the new museum and the re-vamped villa. The new location will also house the Getty Conservation Institute, the photograph collection, and the Getty Center for the History of Art and Humanities.

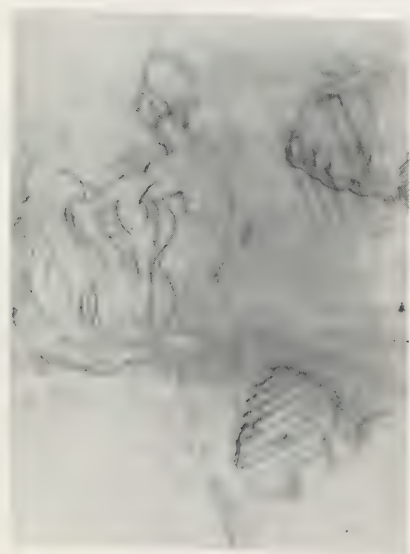


Figure Study and Face, Andrea del Sarto, The J. Paul Getty Museum.

While talking about his long association with IFAR, Walsh offered a thoughtful critique of our two publications and was particularly forthright in his opinion of *Art Research News*. Because he feels that IFAR is now taken quite seriously, he would like to see *Art Research News* become a forum for the discussion of important issues and have editorials that are "crisp and sharply focused." He feels that IFAR is providing a real service by offering an unbiased, professional examination of works of art at a reasonable cost, and is in favor of its current policy of being more selective about the works accepted.

Michael Jaffé



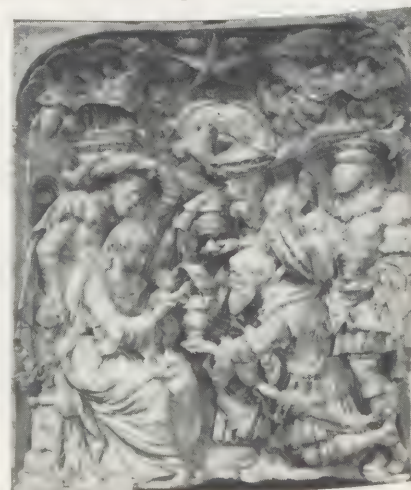
Michael Jaffé is the charismatic director of the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, England, which he describes as "the finest small museum in Western Europe." He is a noted expert of the Flemish 17th-century school of painting and is recognized for his scholarship on Rubens. Educated at Cambridge University and the Courtauld Institute of Art, he is not unfamiliar with the United States, having taught at Washington University and Harvard. Jaffé founded the Department of the History of Art at Cambridge and headed it until 1973, at which time he relinquished his teaching responsibilities to become director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, the repository for the University's collection of art, antiquities and numismatics.

Jaffé is quite literally at home in his position as the Fitzwilliam's director, for he and his family live at Grove Lodge adjacent to the museum. He also has his office there, overlooking a large sunny garden. Jaffé is proud of the museum and its history. He recounts its founding in 1816 by Richard, 7th Viscount Fitzwilliam, who bequeathed to Cambridge his personal collection of some 10,000 books, 123 manuscripts, and thousands of prints as well as paintings, mainly of the Italian and Dutch schools. Lord Fitzwilliam also provided the funds to finance a building to house the works.

A "baroque structure in neo-classical dress" was designed by George Basevi and the museum was opened in 1848. Lord Fitzwilliam's portrait by Joseph Wright of Derby hangs in the impressive main gallery, which is devoted primarily to English

landscape and portraiture. Jaffé chose the splendid red wall coverings of silk waste for this space. With this material no sheen or reflection detracts from the works of art. He noted that the extension to this room, which was redesigned in the first half of the 20th century by the Fitzwilliam's imaginative director, Sidney Cockerell, was the first in any museum to have bay divisions to accommodate furniture and objects as well as paintings.

While walking leisurely through the galleries, Jaffé discussed many works, including the group of Simone Martini panels of *St. Geminianus*, *St. Augustine* and *St. Michael*, among the first important paintings purchased by the museum. He stated that there have been about 1800 additional works added to the collection since the Fitzwilliam bequest, among those an unusual pair of small still-life paintings by Fantin-Latour, which Jaffé says attracts everyone's attention. The collection now includes examples from all the major schools of European painting. Particularly noteworthy is the *Annunciation* by Domenico Veneziano from the St. Lucy Altar and a roomful of Dutch and Flemish flower paintings of the 17th and 18th centuries. Jaffé pointed to one of a set of twelve that the artist Jacobus van Huysum (1686-1740) painted to represent each month. He explained that the paintings are changed on schedule to correspond with the current month of the year. Besides notable works by Titian, Hals, Rubens and Degas, the Fitzwilliam has a sizable collection of watercolors by Turner. Selections of the museum's drawings are well displayed in cloth-covered glass cases in the galleries.



The Adoration of the Magi, Flanders ca. 1540, The Fitzwilliam Museum.

Michael Jaffé has a great interest in the Fitzwilliam's adjunct institution in Whittlesford, the Hamilton Kerr Institute, a center for the study of the conservation of easel paintings. He spoke enthusiastically about the training and research of students and stressed that the philosophy of the Institute is to have the students train "by working on top-level paintings directly, but always with supervision." He feels that this is the only way for the students to learn how to restore a fine work of art. He believes it is scarcely worthwhile to train on poor quality paintings. The Institute takes only the most promising students, who remain there for two or three years. They work on small paintings from the Fitzwilliam, the National Trust, the Royal Collection, and the Ashmolean Museum.

In addition to his museum work, Jaffé acts as a paintings consultant for the National Trust. His recent work for the Trust has taken him to Kingston Lacy in Dorset, which will be open to the public in the autumn of 1985. He is busy also with a major publication on Van Dyck.

Robert Schmit



Robert Schmit is IFAR's newest Advisory Council member. Surrounded by drawings by Matisse, Boudin and Delacroix in his small, elegant office in the rue Saint-Honoré, it was apparent that he enjoys his role as the urbane manager of one of Paris's premier art galleries. Schmit began working over forty years ago with

his father, a dealer in old master paintings. In the 1940s, they began to concentrate on 19th- and 20th-century works exclusively, as Mr. Schmit explains, "because there were many old master works whose origin was doubtful, and because of my preference for the later artists who worked in a lighter palette." He added that with some old master paintings it was necessary to examine them extensively. With 19th and 20th-century works, "all you need is a good eye and a loop."

Schmit inherited his good eye from his father along with a library of 40,000 books, primarily old auction catalogues dating back to the 17th century. Many years of study and experience have taught him to spot a forgery the minute he walks into a room. "It just jumps right out at me," Schmit exclaims. Over the years he has seen many forgeries by Corot, Courbet and Modigliani. He stated that for years many of the works illustrated in the auction catalogues have been wrongly attributed to Stanislas Lépine. He added that they were not necessarily forgeries



The Annunciation, Domenico Veneziano, The Fitzwilliam Museum.

Announcements

(works executed with the intent to deceive), but were probably paintings made by a painter of the same school whose signature was later replaced by an imitation of Lépine's and which were then sold as originals. Much of this confusion is bound to disappear after Robert Schmit publishes his *Catalogue raisonné de l'oeuvre de Stanislas Lépine* and advises several auction houses on Lépine's work.

It is, of course, Schmit's expertise on Eugène Boudin for which he is best known. As the author of the catalogue raisonné on Boudin, a three-volume work, Schmit has studied the artist for forty years. He was originally attracted to him because of his style and beautiful colors. He added that "Boudin painted marvelously until the end," and pointed out, as an example, a work showing the beach at Trouville, dated 1896, which was included in a recent Boudin exhibition of sixty-three of the artist's works at Galerie Schmit. Schmit stated that Boudin's watercolors of quality are quite rare, much more so than his oils because 7,000 of them were given to the Louvre by Boudin's brother Louis at the time of the artist's death in 1898. In the

forty years that he has studied Boudin, Robert Schmit says that he has seen only ten authentic watercolors and pastels of truly great quality.

To maintain the family tradition, Robert's son Manuel has been working in the Paris gallery for almost two years after having trained in the London and New York offices of Sotheby's. He runs the gallery when his father is travelling. Robert Schmit spends a great deal of time out of Paris and admits that at these times he is always looking for a top quality work of art. He noted with amusement and a flicker of pride that he keeps careful track of hundreds of works that he would like to buy, often for many years, before the proper time comes to acquire one of them. He says that this is necessary because the fine works have become very scarce. While looking at the Gauguins, Degas, Van Goghs, Monets, Picassos and Renoirs covering the walls of his large exhibition galleries, that is hard to believe.

Virgilia Heimsath Pancoast

Vallotton Catalogue Raisonné

The Vallotton family in Lausanne, Switzerland has the pleasure to inform all collectors that the catalogue raisonné of Félix Vallotton's painted work is now in progress. Any information on paintings by the artist will be welcome and held strictly confidential. Please write to: Famille Vallotton; 6, Grand-Chêne; CH-1003 Lausanne, Switzerland; Tel. (021) 22-91-66.

Information Requested on New York Colorman Stencils

A directory of New York City artist color-men and canvas preparers from 1830-1890 is being prepared by Alexander Katlan, a fine art conservator in Flushing, New York. Such a directory would be of great assistance in the authentication of 19th-century American paintings. Mr. Katlan is looking for specific examples of the canvas makers' stencils and labels, which appear on the back of these paintings. If any of IFAR's readers can provide examples of these stencils, please write the author at 56-38 Main Street, Flushing, New York 11355, or telephone him at (212) 445-7458.



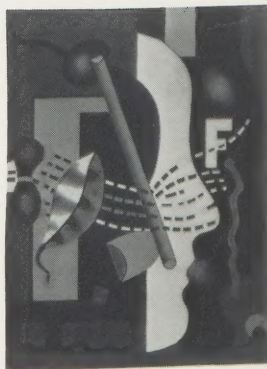
Le Havre. L'avant-port, Eugene Boudin.

IFAR Authentications

IFAR has authenticated recently four 20th century paintings by modern masters that were previously unknown and undocumented. Three of the works are by Fernand Léger; the other is by Georges Braque.

The works by Léger, *Cles et danseuses* (1930), *Nature morte* (1929), and *Composition au fusil* (1929) are variations of other versions of the same subject. It is not unusual for Léger to create several related works in different sizes of the same theme, with minor modifications in the composition or the colors. The styles of all three and their inscriptions on the front and back are entirely original to Léger. In the case of *Nature morte*, the provenance was traced directly back to its purchase from the artist. The fact that the three works have never been exhibited anywhere is due either to the extreme discretion of the former owners or to circumstances that have not been made known.

The fourth work, a still life signed "G. Braque" is also authentic, although it is not well known and does not appear in the major works on Braque's oeuvre. Although not dated, it is typical of his works of the 1920s. The signature is correct, and the work has an impeccable and fully documentable provenance.



Nature morte, Fernand Léger.



Composition au fusil, Fernand Léger.



Cles et danseuses, Fernand Léger.



Still Life, Georges Braque.



Study of a Kneeling Figure with a Sketch of a Face, ca. 1522-24, Andrea del Sarto, The J. Paul Getty Museum.

John Walsh, Jr. lectures on "The Getty Museum of the Future" at IFAR on March 18, 1985.